

Joe Bustillos
COMM201 - November 23, 1987
Guest Speaker: Michael Schwartz

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no - he was the
editor-in-residence
program.

The Metro Editor ~~for~~ the Long Beach Press-Telegram, Michael Schwartz, asked a group of journalism students yesterday, "Why should the Press even care about Ethics?" Schwartz, a guest speaker for Cal State Fullerton's Editor-in-Residence program, pointed out three reasons for ethics during his hour-long afternoon talk.

While it is part of the publisher's first amendment rights to print any story he wants, Schwartz said, any publisher who displays a lack of ethics runs the risk of losing his readers. "What the government can't do [censor the press], public opinion can," Schwartz said.

Second of the three reasons was the fear of libel or public lawsuits. Schwartz didn't elaborate this point for his understanding audience.

The third reason, which formed the backbone to his understanding of ethics in the Press, was public trust. "The people have a right to expect a certain thing from you. . . They have a right to expect credibility," he said.

He said that the press has been given a responsibility to objectively inform and communicate the facts. Anything that appears to compromise a reporter's ability to objectively communicate the facts, whether it is a travel editor going on

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"free trips" or a theater critic reporting on one of his own productions, it is to be strictly avoided, according to Schwartz.

In view of the Press' role in the resignation of Hart from the Presidential race and the Jim Bakker scandal, Schwartz ANALYZED brought up the issue of the individual's right to privacy and the public's desire to be informed. In discussion with his audience, Schwartz agreed that because of the public positions of persons involved in the Hart and Bakker stories, ~~that~~ the Press was not out of line in bringing the stories to the public. "It is rarely a black and white situation with ethics," he added.

As an example, he ~~presented~~ TOLD the story of the death of a little boy from a small California town. A photographer from the local paper had taken a picture of the parents of the small boy just as they received the news of the boy's death. According to Schwartz, the photograph powerfully captured the immense grief of the moment. The question then was, does the Press have the right to publish this photograph that captures a very private moment or would that be an invasion of privacy? Some students said that the picture should have been published and just as many said that it should not be published. Schwartz said that when the story broke, the newspapers reacted like the students. Half of the papers carried the story and half didn't.

Schwartz, who has been with the Long Beach Press-Telegram for five years, graduated from the University of Michigan as an English literature major and journalism minor. He did his third

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internship for the Detroit Free-Press and took his first full-time reporting job with the St. Petersburg Times. He joined the Long Beach Press-Telegram as ¹²~~their~~ city editor for Urban Affairs. He will ~~be speaking~~ this afternoon at 4 ~~p.m.~~ as part of the ~~Editor-in-Residence~~ program. For more information contact Cal State Fullerton, Communications-News/Editorial.

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